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ABSTRACT

The instructional management system of Glendale (Arizona) Union High School District is described. Efforts in this area are coordinated through six interrelated components: (1) a well-defined curriculum, with extensive review and community survey of learner priorities; (2) program improvement plans based on the Theory Z concept, in which the relationship is emphasized between overall school goals, curriculum objectives, and personal improvement objectives for students; (3) involvement of teachers in curriculum decisions and instructional management to assure continual feedback between curriculum planning and classroom instruction; (4) student evaluation based on extensive curriculum based pre- and posttesting programs; (5) a teacher evaluation system emphasizing mutual respect, clinical supervision, and objective measurement of research-tested instructional techniques; and (6) a staff development program corresponding to the teacher evaluation methods, emphasizing appropriate learning objectives and the Essential Elements of Instruction developed by Dr. Madeline Hunter of the University of California at Los Angeles. (TE)

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AN APPROACH TO INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

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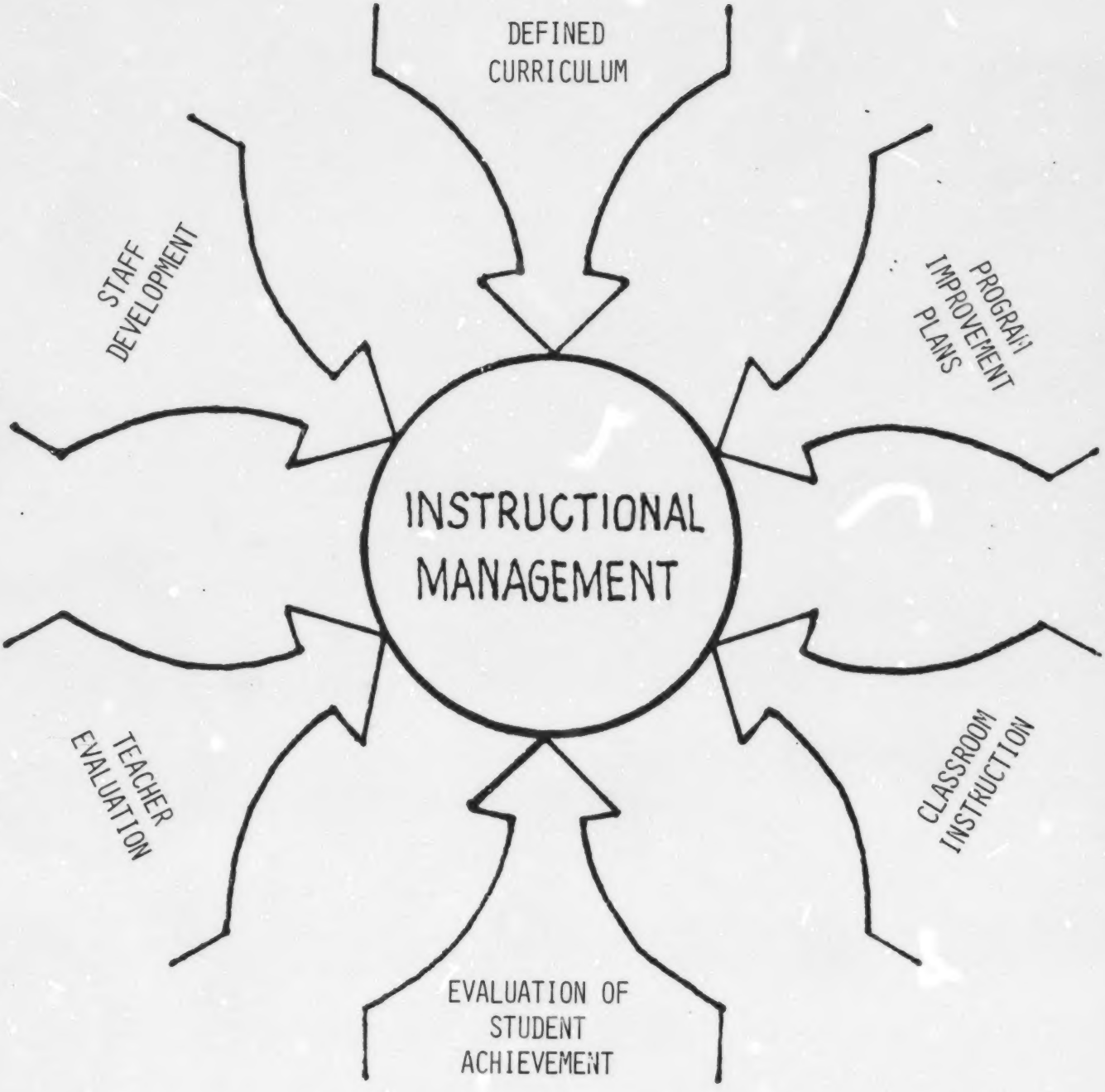
Educators across the country are facing many educational challenges. The annual Gallup poll reports declining levels of public confidence in education. The National Commission on Excellence in Education listed these concerns in its report "A Nation at Risk":

> "The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but, also from the chance to participate fully in our national life.
>
> Our society and its educational institutions seem to have lost sight of the basic purpose of schooling and the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to achieve them."

The public is demanding, and rightfully so, that a nearly 20-year decline in scholastic aptitude test scores be halted, that secondary school curricula be strengthened to meet higher college admission requirements, and that all students be held accountable for demonstrating mastery of skills before advancing. The public expectation is that basic skills should be emphasized, and that the student's ability to analyze, draw conclusions and solve complex problems be increased.

Considerable evidence exists that Glendale Union High School District schools are an exception to these reports and are meeting the demands of the public. We are able to do this through well-planned, coordinated efforts. For example, through research on effective schools we know that strong instructional leadership is an attribute present in an effective school. Instructional leadership and management is a high priority for the Glendale District. As illustrated in the diagram, the Instructional Management System coordinates efforts in this area through six distinct, but interrelated, components.


DEFINED CURRICULUM
STAFF DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANS
INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT
TEACHER EVALUATION
CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION
EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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DEFINED CURRICULUM

The first component of the Instructional Management System is a well-defined curriculum. It is this component that gives direction to the instructional effort of the entire district. With a defined curriculum, the district, the individual school and the classroom teacher can set educational goals and monitor the level of student achievement.

Since 1974, the Glendale Union High School District has been engaged in identifying specific course content for every subject. Extensive program structures have been written for areas in English, mathematics, reading, science and social studies. Course outlines have been developed for classes in all other subject matter areas.

These program structures and course outlines are written by teachers who are currently instructors of the course. Periodic evaluations of this material are conducted to eliminate "pet projects" and to ensure comtemporary content. These evaluations are coordinated with textbook review to allow for timely adoption of new texts. Every effort is made to maintain the content at an appropriate level to challenge students' academic abilities.

To ensure the offering of an essential and comprehensive curriculum, this past year the District conducted an extensive curriculum review and thorough community survey of learner priorities. The on-going curriculum review will establish all courses as either essential, desirable or optional. This is to establish a continuity of content across a nine high school district which serves 15,000 students. It is not an effort to stifle the individuality or creativity of the classroom teacher. Teachers are encouraged to bring creativity to the instructional process since it has been demonstrated that uniqueness of instruction assists the student to master and retain the desired curriculum.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Program Improvement Plans, the next component, are a unique procedure at each of the nine high schools in the Glendale Union High School District.

Program Improvement Plans at Thunderbird High School are based on a concept espoused by William Ouchi. In his book, Theory Z, he wrote:

> "A statement of your company's objectives, its philosophy, gives people a sense of value to work and live by. It suggests ways to behave in the organization and the way for the organization to behave in response to its people, its clients and the community it serves."

During orientation at the beginning of the school year, each teacher receives a packet which contains:

1. The mission statement for the District and the educational philosophy of Thunderbird High School.
2. Learner goal priorities as identified by a district-wide community survey.
3. A statement depicting our concept of Thunderbird High School ten years in the future.
4. A format for developing Program Improvement Plans in three areas. These areas are:
   a. An overall school goal
   b. Specific curriculum objectives
   c. A personal improvement objective

The current overall goal of Thunderbird High School is to increase the literacy skills of every student. To reach this goal, each teacher will include activities which promote the learning and application of the basic skills of verbal and written communication, reading and mathematical computation along with the content specific to the course.

Specific curriculum objectives are identified by each department, or by instructional teams within a department. Then, specific course content

to meet the objectives is emphasized. Curriculum objectives may be determined by an analysis of pre-test scores (for courses under the Instructional Management System) or by the desire of teachers to strengthen instruction in an area which has proven to be difficult for students to master. The intent is to encourage teachers to interact, plan instruction and share those concepts and techniques which have been successful. This type of discussion adds to the professional growth of educators.

The areas that have been identified are communicated to the district office and progress is monitored locally throughout the year. Achievement levels in these areas are emphasized in a year end report to the Governing Board. Final examinations for courses not under the Instructional Management System are correlated to the course outline. Thus an accountability system is effected for both the administrator and the classroom teacher.

A personal improvement objective is identified by teachers as an area in which they desire to grow personally and professionally. The area may be content knowledge, instructional technique, human development or any other area mutually agreed upon by the teacher and the administrator.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

The third component involves classroom instruction.

A well defined curriculum and Program Improvement Plans are tools which provide specific direction for instruction. The role of teachers in the development of this direction is vital. The opportunity for involvement is offered at the district level through the development and recycling of program structures, course outlines and evaluation of instruments. Local school input is afforded through the writing and implementation of dynamic

Program Improvement Plans. Teachers have the opportunity to directly and significantly influence instructional management.

The intent is to involve the teaching faculty in curriculum and instruction decisions. Teachers must recognize and accept a position of responsibility in instructional management. After all, it is the daily interaction between teachers and students which brings meaning to these words.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Following the classroom instruction component is the evaluation of student achievement.

The Glendale Union High School District emphasizes accountability to the community for the quality of education provided to its young people. In 1974 the District organized a comprehensive system to determine the success of instruction. Extensive pre- and post-testing programs are engaged each year in the high priority courses of English, mathematics, reading, science and social studies. Pre-tests provide teachers with diagnostic data which is used to ensure appropriate student placement and to plan instruction based upon the identified needs of students. Post-tests measure the degree to which students have mastered and retained the defined course content. While these tests assist in determining minimal skill levels, they emphasize achievement at the average or above average skill level.

Dr. Lawrence Lezotte of Michigan State University is a leading researcher of effective schools. His research indicates that student achievment should be measured by instruments which are: locally generated, curricular-based, criterion-referenced, standardized, and nationally validated.

The Glendale Union High Instructional Management System tests meet this criteria with the exception of being nationally validated. We believe, however, that student performance on such instruments as the ACT, SAT and CAT give clear indication that the district testing program is meeting its objectives.

Classroom teachers play an integral role in the development of Instructional Management Systems testing instruments. Under the direction of IMS curriculum coordinators, teachers develop criterion-referenced test models and banks of questions relating to the program structures and course outlines. Individual questions are then selected, refined and field-tested before they are included in the secure form of a course post-test. These evaluation instruments also undergo continuous evaluation and refinement. A newly developed course structure and evaluation instrument in any area is expected to be refined during the first few years. For this reason, the IMS provides a recycling process that gives teachers direct input into refining course content and the evaluation instruments. A result of this is a set of very stable freshman English materials which have been in use for nine years and provide a sound basis for decision making.

The data generated by such a program is a powerful tool in analyzing the educational program and the level of student achievement. It may also be an indicator of the effectiveness of classroom instruction. This is an extremely sensitive area and must be approached with great care and professionalism. Thus, the purpose of the system and the intended use of the testing data must be clearly defined when the program is initiated.

Student achievement in subject areas not under the Instructional Management System is measured by traditional teacher-developed classroom examinations.

TEACHER EVALUATION

Teacher evaluation is perhaps the most critical activity performed by educational administrators. The successful accomplishment of meaningful evaluation requires that a sound philosophy be developed and clearly communicated. The primary goal of evaluation is to assist the educator in developing and/or strengthening all the skills necessary to provide each student with a high quality educational experience. It is essential that a feeling of mutual trust and respect be established as the teacher and administrator work toward this common goal. From this basis the evaluation process may be approached as a cooperative effort.

Even when the greatest care is taken, evaluation may be a threatening experience to some individuals. This may present difficulty for both parties. The teacher must not allow anxiety to negate the opportunity for growth. The administrator must create a situation in which growth will occur, yet remain sensitive to each individual. A long-term commitment may be required as time is a necessary function of growth and must be allowed if the tenents of the basic philosophy are to be maintained.

Research and development by Dr. Madeline Hunter of U.C.L.A. has helped to make evaluation an objective process. Clinical supervision and Essential Elements of Instruction techniques are now being widely used in our district. These effective instructional skills identified by Dr. Hunter

are observable and can be easily taught. This gives administrators a base from which to work during evaluation. Once the areas of strength and the areas which must be strengthened are identified, the work of Staff Development can begin.

There are possible implications for teacher evaluation within the data measuring student achievement. It is not realistic to deny the relationship between high quality classroom instruction and high levels of demonstrated student achievement. The position of the Glendale Union High School District is that these scores, in and of themselves, are not teacher evaluative. No reference to these scores is ever made in any formal evaluation statement. The data may, however, be considered as one of several indicators signaling that teacher/administrator interaction is appropriate. The decision at Thunderbird High School to meet this administrative responsibility is not based on a single set of scores, but rather on longitudinal data. Remember, evaluation begins when the administrator enters the classroom and personally observes the instructional process.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development is the last component of the Instructional Management System to be discussed. Staff Development and evaluation share the same primary goal: to assist educators in acquiring new skills and strengthening existing skills. It offers both administrators and classroom teachers an opportunity to grow.

The District has instituted an internal staff development program. This requires that administrators, curriculum coordinators and local staff

development trainers become proficient in the desired skills prior to working with other faculty members. In such a situation, the person guiding the staff development effort maintains a high degree of credibility.

While staff development covers a broad spectrum of concepts, our current emphasis is on Dr. Hunter's Essential Elements of Instruction. These elements include the concepts of:

1. Selecting an objective at the correct level of difficulty for students.
2. Teaching to a specific objective.
3. Monitoring and adjusting the learning experience.
4. Using the principles of learning to facilitate academic progress.

Four years ago an associate of Dr. Hunter, Sue Wells Welsh, was employed by the District to teach these concepts to administrators and selected groups of teachers. This year local schools will assume partial responsibility for this program. The District goal is to provide training in the Essential Elements of Instruction to each teacher. A staff development trainer has been assigned to each campus to assist with this goal. The trainers will be involved in conducting workshops for small groups, observing instruction, conferencing with teachers, assisting with the interpretation of test data and assisting in the development and implementation of Program Improvement Plans.

This integrated system affords the opportunity for a cooperative effort between administrators and teachers as we seek to provide a high quality educational experience to our students.

Thus, the Instructional Management System, with its six components, contributes to making the Glendale Union High School District an exception to the general feeling about the quality of education. With the continued development and refinement of programs and the dedication of the teachers and administrators in our district, the Glendale Union High School District can continue to meet and overcome the challenges facing educators across the country.

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